

Saigon, Vietnam

A-2592

15 September 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Ambassador
SUBJECT : Agreement on Viet Cong Strength Figures

As I reported in our 14 September conversation, agreement has been reached between COMUSMACV and the representatives of CIA, DIA and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research on the following estimate of current Viet Cong strength:

MILITARY

Main and Local Forces	119,000	-	(119,000)
Administrative Services	35,000	-	40,000
Guerrillas	70,000		<u>90,000</u>
Total Military Force	224,000	-	249,000
<u>POLITICAL CADRE</u>	75,000	-	85,000
Aggregate Total	299,000		334,000

The issue of the "irregulars" (self-defense, secret self-defense, assault youth, etc.) derived from COMUSMACV strong feeling that no quantified estimate of current strength should be given (since this would give a number that could be taken and used out of context) and the need felt in Washington for some form of order of magnitude indication. This issue was resolved by treating the subject in narrative form. A copy of the agreed draft text on this topic was given to you on 14 September.

Though the above figures show an aggregate total, we in Washington are of the strong conviction - shared by our colleagues in MACV - that this aggregate total is meaningless and misleading. Washington publications on this topic will not use or refer to any such aggregate total.

Though we have reached agreement on a political cadre total using presently accepted definitions, we also agree that these

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definitions need considerable refinement and, hence, the number they dictate is not particularly meaningful or helpful. Present definitions include much more than the true political "leadership" but exclude many trained and full-time activists. General Davidson, my Saigon colleagues and I are jointly initiating an interagency effort to refine and improve our analysis and conceptual breakthrough of the enemy's political organization. When this necessary work is completed, the "political" figure in its present form will disappear.

I understand that General Westmoreland has formally endorsed the agreements outlined above and so reported to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As indicated in our conversation, the discussions which led to these agreements were lively but most beneficial to all parties involved. The atmosphere has been cleared, we have much better understanding of each others' views, and I believe Washington and Saigon will now be on the same wave length, something that will greatly benefit all aspects of our common endeavor.

Per your request, I am appending a spread sheet which summarizes the initial Washington and Saigon positions and the process through which final agreement was reached. I would be most grateful if, through General Westmoreland, you would extend to General Davidson and all of his able, most impressive staff, the thanks of the entire Washington delegation for their effective, comprehensive briefings and other invaluable contributions to the success of our joint endeavor.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant to the Director
of Central Intelligence for
Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment
As Stated Above

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S E C R E T

<u>NIE 14.3 28 August Draft</u>	<u>11 Sept. MACV Briefing</u>	<u>11 Sept. MACV Proposal</u>	<u>Washington Reps.</u>	<u>Final Figur</u>
			<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Agreed</u>
<u>MILITARY</u>				
Main & Local Force	121,000 - (121,000)	119,000	119,000 - (119,000)	119,000 - 119,000 119,000-119,000
Admin Service	40,000 - 60,000	29,000	25,000 - 35,000	35,000 - 45,000 35,000- 40,000
Merrillas	60,000 - 100,000	65,000	75,000 - 95,000	75,000 - 95,000 70,000- 90,000
Military Total	221,000 - 281,000	213,000	219,000 - 249,000 (234,000)	229,000 - 259,000 224,000-249,000
<u>POLITICAL</u>	90,000 - (90,000)	85,000	70,000 - 80,000	80,000 80,000 75,000- 85,000
Aggregate Total	311,000 - 371,000	293,000	289,000 - 329,000	309,000 - 349,000 299,000-334,000

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